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Contact: Joe Jimenez, (253) 318-1177
PublicAffairs@t2health.org

Military Kids Website Helps Parents and Educators

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.—The Department of Defense website for military children added new features to help parents and educators explain difficult topics of the military lifestyle to children.

Since its launch last January, MilitaryKidsConnect.org has served more than 125,000 visitors and won five industry excellence awards. To mark the one-year anniversary, the website added new content designed for children, parents and educators. The new features include:

- Military culture videos and lesson plans for teachers, school counselors, and educators to better understand the differences between military and civilian youth.
- Graphic novels and mini-documentaries by military kids sharing their experiences.
- New modules for children and parents on handling grief, loss, and physical injury.

MilitaryKidsConnect.org was created by the Defense Department's National Center for Telehealth and Technology, known as T2.

The website uses innovative ways to help military youth cope with the unique strains of military life. In addition to disruptions from parents deploying to assignments away from home, military children are affected by moving frequently, changing schools and making new friends. They also have to live with readjustment issues when a parent returns from deployments. These issues may include posttraumatic stress and physical disabilities.

"After watching the interaction with kids on MilitaryKidsConnect this past year, we saw many conversations about trying to understand the issues they live with," said Dr. Kelly Blasko, T2 psychologist. "We developed the added features to help parents and teachers answer the questions the kids were sharing with each other."

Blasko said the website is continuing to add features and information to military children with the special challenges of living in a military family. Separations, moving and changing friends frequently may be unusual for civilian children, but is a normal lifestyle for military children. The website helps them live in that world and, hopefully, makes it more fun for them.

The National Center for Telehealth and Technology, located at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA, serves as the primary Department of Defense office for cutting-edge approaches in applying technology to psychological health. More information about MilitaryKidsConnect.org and T2 is available at <http://www.t2health.org>.

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